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Union Depot For a Day

BY
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A Drama Employing Fifty People

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Union Depot for a Day

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

Make your stage as much like a railroad station as you possibly can. There must be a ticket office, or window, for the ticket agent. Have railroad maps on the wall. Have a lunch counter with actual lunch and hot coffee. Have for the seats in the Station, benches as near like the real thing as you can find. Settees such as are found in shoe stores, those with perforated seats are nearest like the genuine. Have one row of seats well to the front of the stage, and have the chief actors always take these seats so that the scenes will be in full view of the audience. There must be passenger, coming and going and buying tickets who have no special part. Make everything as natural and as much like a railroad station as you can.

ARRIVAL OF TRAIN—A farm bell and a pipe of carbonated soda from a soda-water factory. With the soda pipe is made the sound of escaping steam by letting the carbon gas escape. If there is a window at hand the sound of the car wheels going over the switches may be made by two short successive jars of the window-sash, then a pause and then two more jars of the sash, and so on.

DEPARTURE OF TRAINS—Use the farm bell and snare drum. With the drum the sound of getting up steam is made as the train pulls out. The drummer drums slowly at first and near the center of the drum-head, he gradually drums faster and faster, but more toward the edge of the drum and with gradually less force and it at last sounds like the roar and rumble of wheels, growing less and less until it dies away. Have two pieces of sand paper, each tacked on a board. By standing near so the audience can hear, and rubbing these two together vigorously the sound of escaping steam in the cylinder can be heard. With these devices an almost perfect simulation can be made of the arrival and departure of trains. The sound of the arrival and departure is always, with but three exceptions, at the same time that the depot master calls a train. The reason of this is, it makes it easier for the one who has the train apparatus in charge to tell when to make the sound of trains, and, as it naturally makes a great noise so that nothing can be heard, it is better to have all the confusion at once when there is no conversation going on.

SPECIAL TRAIN CALL OF DEPOT MASTER—"All aboard for Milwaukee, Chicago and St. Paul and all points northward—train on fourth track."

The depot master may use his ingenuity in fixing up the train calls to amuse the audience. He can substitute the very smallest local stations he can think of, such as "Bybee Station," "Spoon River Crossing," etc.

UNION RAILROAD STATION—Curtain rises, showing a few people scattered around, among them Joe Gamin, with ticket agent in place.

(Sound of arriving train.)

(Enter old lady with bonnet awry—rushes through depot—man's voice is heard)--'Bus, madam; have a 'bus?

Old Lady—Indeed I won't have a buss! I've got an old man at home to do my bussin', I'd have you know.

(From same train enter Mrs. Martha Chattermuch and daughter, Maria, in a flurry, carrying numerous bundles.)

Mrs. Chattermuch—Are you sure, Maria, you've got everything? For pity's sake, child, do keep off my dress!

Maria—Yes, ma, I have—Oh, my goodness gracious, where is your silk umbrell'? Have you got it?

Mrs. C.—No, I haven't. I told you particular to look after that umbrell', you are that heedless. Why, that umbrell' cost me $1.35, and I've only had it a year. What in the name of common sense shall we do? Don't stand there and stare at me like you'd lost all the sense you ever did have, but hurry to the train. [Exit daughter.]

Mrs. C—(Continues)—Dear me, I wish I had one daughter that had a little of her mother's common sense. I wonder if everything else is here. (Counts bundles.) Here's our lunch basket, bird cage, kitten in a box, (that I'm taking to little Johnnie) Mary's slips—Land sakes! where's my handbag; and it had all my medicines in it, too. (Goes to the door and calls.) Maria! Maria! where's my handbag? (Enter Maria.) Here's your handbag, ma—but the train is gone, and what shall we do about your silk umbrell'?

Mrs. C—What shall we do, sure enough.

(Joe Gamin approaches, and winks at lunch counter man.) 'Scuse me, marm, but have you lost something?

Mrs. C—Yes. I have, little boy. I've lost my best black silk umbrell' that cost me $1.35.

Maria—(Interrupting)—We left it on the train.

Mrs. C—Be still, Maria, when I'm talking. Yes, we left it on the train, and now the train's gone and I don't know how I'll ever get it back again.

Joe Gamin—Well, now, it 'pears to me the best thing you can do is to get on the next train and follow it up.

Mrs. C—Land sakes, child, you think that's what I'd better do?

Joe—Well, I wouldn't want to lose so good an umbrella as that, and I don't know what else you can do.

Mrs. C—When does the next train go?

Joe—Let me see; it is now half-past nine—well, what train did you come in on?

Mrs. C—Why, we just got here. We come from Dunfermline up the road——

Joe—Oh! well, you can get a train out of here at half-past four this afternoon.

Mrs. C—Oh! land sakes, boy, we can't do that, fer this is my Charlie's birthday, and we come to give him a surprise.

(Enter depot master.)

Depot Master—Joe, you young scamp, what are you up to now? Another of your tricks, I suppose. Madam, what is the trouble?

Mrs. C—Why, I've lost my best black silk umbrell'; it cost me $1.35.

Maria—We left it on the train.

Mrs. C—Be still, Maria, when I am talking.

Depot Master—What train did you come in on?

Mrs. C—We come from Dunfermline up the road; this is our Charlie's birthday, and we come to surprise him.

D. M.—Yes, yes; I understand. Well, madam you go on to Charlie's. I'll telephone to the next station and we'll send your umbrella back; any time after half past ten you can send for it and get it here.

Mrs. C—Well, you're a likely chap; my name's Martha Chattermuch; I live in the little white house with green blinds, and if you ever come to Dunfermline, stop and see us and I'll give you one of the biggest dinners you ever sot down to.

D. M.—Thank you.

Mrs. C—Now hurry up, Maria, or we won't get up to Charlie's fer dinner. You know they live a long ways out; be sure to get everything. Have you got that package of seed cakes?

Maria—Yes.

Mrs. C—That basket of apples?

Maria—Yes.

Mrs. C—And the hand-bag?

Maria—Yes.

Mrs. C—And the slips and kitten?

Maria—Yes.

Mrs. C—That blackberry jam?

Maria—Yes, yes, yes!

Mrs. C—Well, then, hustle up. [Exit.]

(Arrival of train.)

(Among passengers Aunt Amelia Saylittle and nephew and strolling Italians. Aunt Amelia and nephew get seated. She gives him a sack of

candy, takes a book and commences reading. The strolling Italians sing, pass hat and exit, Nephew Willie watching intently.)

Willie—Auntie, what did we come in here for?

Aunt—To wait for our train.

Willie—What train?

Aunt—The train that will take us to Uncle Harry's.

Willie—Why didn't we stay on the train we were on?

Aunt—Because that does not go to Uncle Harry's.

Willie—But I say, why doesn't it?

Aunt—Willie, I wish you wouldn't bother me so much with your foolish questions. You don't let me read at all. I told you before we left home we would have to change cars.

Willie—How long do we have to wait?

Aunt—About 20 minutes. Now do be a good boy and let Auntie read awhile.

(Enter depot master and calls train.)

Willie—Auntie, what did that man say?

Aunt—He called a train.

Willie—What does he do that for?

Aunt—So people will know what train to take.

Willie—Don't people always know which train to take?

Aunt—Not always.

Willie—Well, they're not very smart. Say, Auntie, what is that thing over there? (Pointing to a penny-in-the-slot machine.)

Aunt—That's a weighing machine.

Willie—Funny looking scales, I think. (Goes over and looks at it, then goes back to aunt.) Could you weigh an elephant on it?

Aunt—Why, of course not, child.

Willie—Would you like to ride an elephant, auntie?

Aunt—Mercy, no, child.

Willie—I would, and Bert Skiles would. It would be jolly fun—but I don't like Bert Skiles any more; do you?

Aunt—Why, yes; why don't you like him?

Willie—In the game the other day I got to "second" on a "two-bagger" and Bert said I died on "second," and I didn't do no such thing. They didn't get the ball until after I touched "second," and "Needles" said so, too.

Aunt—Died on "second"—what does that mean?

Willie—Why, don't you know? Oh, of course ladies don't understand anything about baseball. It's only men who can understand. I told Bert I could lick him with one hand tied and mop up the earth with him—but I wouldn't.

Aunt—I am glad you were brave enough not to fight.

Willie—Bert'd better just look out how he comes around me.

Aunt—Now, do be quiet just a few minutes and let auntie read.

(Quiet for a few minutes, then begins.)

Willie—Auntie, do you know what I am going to be when I am a man?

Aunt—No, Willie; what?

Willie—Why, I'll be a conductor and wear brass buttons on my coat and I won't let Bert ride on my train at all. Say, Aunt Em, what does the conductor do with all those tickets he takes up?

Aunt—Gives them to the railroad officials, I think.

Willie—What's that?

Aunt—The men who own the road.

Willie—Do they wear brass buttons on their coat?

Aunt—(Closes book in despair)—Yes, I think so.

Willie—Guess I'll be one of them—no, I believe when I get big I'll loop the loop in the circus.

Aunt—Come, Willie, there's our train. [Exit.]

(Train call and sound of arriving train.)

(Among passengers enter Uncle Joshua Hayseed and wife, Aunt Sarah. Uncle Josh carrying an old-fashioned trunk, and carpet-sack and cotton umbrella.)

Uncle Josh—(Puffing and blowing with exertion)—Tell me they'll take my trunk—why, of course they'd take this nice trunk if I'd let 'em, but I'd just like to see 'em take it, drat 'em. They must think I'm a fool. Tell me to put a check on it—I've got my checks down in my jeans and thars where they're goin' to stay. They must think I'm made of money, con-

sarn 'em; that thar trunk's goin' to stay right thar and when I go I'll take it myself, and I'll knock the first feller that lays his hand on it.

Aunt Sarah—Thar, thar, don't get riled, Joshua; it won't do no good to get madded about it. I'd hate the worst kind myself to lose the trunk with that pair of dressed chickens fer Mary Ann, and the pennyrial, and the pat of butter and all our Sunday clothes, and them thar daisies what Mary Ann sets such store by and calls em "Maggereats," er some such name; I call 'em weeds and they ain't no 'count but to choke up the corn and keep it from growin', but Mary Ann says they're lovely.

Uncle Joshua—Sary, did ye put in my butte'nut jeans? I want 'em to knock 'round the barn while we're at Mary Ann's. Yer most ought ter be dressed up ter go ter her barn, 'cause everything's so fine 'round thar, but I jist can't stay dressed up all the time.

Aunt S—Yes, Joshua, I put in yer jeans and my best bunnet, and my turkey-tail fan. Mary Ann gave me a new-fangled one, but there's nothing like my turkey-tail to give a good breeze.

(Uncle Joshua strolls off, but while within hearing of Aunt Sarah, Joe Gamin approaches and accosts Uncle Josh.)

Joe Gamin—I say, Uncle, does your mother know yer out?

Aunt S—Waal, I guess his mother knows he's out. Didn't he kiss her goodby this blessed mornin'? But I'm thinkin' that's more than yer mother knows. Do you go to Sunday School, Bub?

Joe Gamin—Do yer mean one of them thar places whar they sing and want yer ter set still and want yer ter have yer face washed? Yer kin bet yer bottom dollar that hain't my style.

Aunt S—It's very wicked to bet, Bubby; do yer know whar men go what bet and gamble.

Joe G—They go jist 'round the corner to Lowney's. No end of swell gents go thar. I'll show yer old man the way. (Darts away with a wicked twinkle in his eye.)

(Uncle Josh returns to his wife just as depot master comes along and notices trunk.)

D. M.—What's this trunk doing here?

Uncle Josh—Hey?

D. M.—Is this your trunk?

Uncle Josh—It don't belong to nobody else and it ain't for sale, nuther.

D. M.—But why don't you take it to the baggage room?

Uncle J—Because I'm going to take it to Mary Ann's. See here, young feller, thar's no use tryin' ter get this trunk from me. A lot of fellers tried that game on me when we fust got here, but they had to give it up, fer Uncle Josh was too cute fer 'em. Now, while yer a likely lookin' chap and no doubt think yer purty sharp, yer can't get ahead of me, nohow. Why, I cut my eye-teeth long afore you was born.

D. M.—My good man, you are laboring under a mistake; no one wants to take your trunk from you. Show your ticket to the baggage man, and he will put a little ticket or check on your trunk and give you one just like it, and you have no more care about it. When you get to your journey's end show your check and you'll get your trunk all safe and sound.

Uncle J—Waal, I want to know! Waal, it do beat all these new-fangled notions. I've heard a lot about telegraphin' and sich but I never knowed how they worked it afore. Are ye sure that's right, stranger? Do ye give me yer word that I'll get my trunk all safe?

D. M.—Certainly, you will. (To Joe Gamin) Here, Joe, help this man carry his trunk to the baggage room.

Uncle J—Be all-fired keerful how yer handle it.

Joe G—Bet your life I will. I say, Uncle, how did yer leave old Noah when yer come?

Uncle J—Waal, now, how did yer know old Noah Hopkins was sick? He's been powerful bad, but he's slowly mendin'.

(Exit Joe and Uncle Josh with trunk. While gone Aunt Sarah takes out knitting. Uncle Josh soon returns to Aunt Sarah.)

Aunt S—I know Mary Ann'll be dretful glad to see us. She always is, though she do live in such a fine house and puts on sich style. Her and Henry made us no end welcome the other time we was thar.

Uncle Josh—I wonder if they'll have that starched up feller to open the door, what they had afore when we was thar.

Aunt S—Why, of course—that's style; and do remember, Joshua, and don't make too much of him.

Uncle Josh—Waal, now, don't throw that up to me. How could I tell

what he was when I fust saw him. He was dressed so fine and looked so noble like, I calkilated he must be some prince or king from furren parts. I 'lowed he'd dropped in to see Henry, and as he wasn't to hum he was jist waitin' fur him and opened the door fur us. And I was that tickled that Mary Ann and Henry had sich way-up company, that I wanted to treat him jist as clever as I knowed how. I've read somewhar that you must say "Your Royal Highness" to kings and dukes, and I was goin' to be perlite if I died fer it. And I jist bet yer didn't know no better till the feller laffed and Mary Ann come.

Aunt S—Thar, thar; mebby I didn't. And, Joshua, we must try to call Mary Ann, Marian; I think that's what it is; she 'pears to like it so much better.

Uncle Josh—Well, she was christened Mary Ann, and I can't seem ter call her nothing else, but I'll try.

Aunt S—And, Joshua, I've heerd it's not perlite to cut yer pie with yer knife; ye must cut it with yer fork. It ain't perlite to the pie crust, ye know. An' I think it's rale sensible like, too, for pie crust that ye can't cut with a fork hain't fit ter eat. And thar haint no pie crust ever I made that yer couldn't cut with a fork easy. So recollect yon kin eat yer pie with yer knife, bnt cut it with yer fork. Won't we s'prise Mary Ann with our good manners, since we was thar before? She'll see we've larned a heap.

Uncle Josh—It must be gittin' nigh onto time fur the keers.

Aunt S—And, Joshua, when we git to Mary Ann's, do remember about them thar bells, and don't git the perlice an' the fire injines a-hurryin' like all persessed to Mary Ann's in the dead o' night.

Uncle J—They've got the all-firedest lot o' bells in that thar house but I'll lay out to git the right one if I kin.

(Uncle Josh strolls off and finds a weighing machine. He reads, "This tells your exact weight.")

Uncle J—Waal, now, that's clever. Gee whiz! it says I weigh two hundred and twenty-five pounds. Say, here's a consarn what tells ye yer weight. Come here.

(Aunt Sarah approaches and reads, "This tells your exact weight.")

Aunt S—My goodness, Joshua, you've got ter put yer penny in before they'll weigh yer!

Uncle J—Waal, now, wouldn't that beat ye? I thought I'd fleshed up powerful to weigh two hundred and twenty-five pounds. Waal, I'll give the feller down thar my penny.

(Enter depot master and their train is called.)

Uncle J—It's time to take the keers; we must hurry. (Turns to machine and calls in it at the top of his voice) Say, mister, jist keep the change an' we'll git weighed when we come back. We ain't got time now. We're goin' to Mary Ann's.

(Departing train.)

(Enter passengers from city. Among them Deacon Longface and school girls, laughing.)

Deacon Longface—(Hearing girls laugh)—My young friends, such levity is unseemly. Don't you know that in the midst of life we are in death. I infer you intend boarding one of the outgoing trains. What assurance have you that before reaching your destination you may not be hurled into eternity?

Flo—We're likely to go safe enough—always have yet. What's the use of being glum? We're in for the good times while they are going.

Deacon L—Young woman, good times are not for mortals in this vale of tears. Woe and misery are all about us. We should repress every impulse to mirth and hilarity and seek to be solemn as becometh creatures destined for the grave.

Flo—Well, I can't do the solemn act. It's not my style. Now, you are just cut ont for it. But I wonder that you ever lived to grow up—that your goodness did not cause you to fill an early grave.

Deacon—I perceive I am "casting my pearls before swine."

Flo.—Polite way of calling me a pig.

Deacon L—Young woman, you are on the broad road to ruin. But remember, when you have plunged headlong to destruction, that I admonished you.

Joe Gamin—Hullo, guvernor, what's the fracas? You look mad enough to bite a ten-penny nail in two."

Deacon—(Trying to regain his usual expression)—No, no, my son, you

are laboring under a false impression. I never pour out the vials of my wrath upon the heads of those who so justly deserve it. But there are times when I am filled with a righteous indignation, because of the gross ignorance and hard-heartedness of those who will not heed my admonitions and adjurations.

Joe—Hear dat lingo! Wouldn't dat get your nerve?

Deacon—I very much fear, my lad, from your light and ungodly speech that you are on your way to perdition.

Joe—Perdition? I never hearn tell of that town. Whar is it? 'Tain't no bigger than Chicago, is it?

Deacon—(catching him by the arm)—Degraded child! I believe the devil has hold of you.

Joe—(Looking up at him defiantly)—He sure has.

Deacon—Oh, the perverseness of this generation. Men can not hurry fast enough these days. They are rushing to perdition as fast as the wheels of their devil wagons can carry them.

Joe—And you just better believe I'll keep up with the percession! Ain't he a rum 'un?

(Sound of departing train.)

(Enter dude. Deacon looks at Joe but deigns no reply and walks away in disgust. School girls' conversation is heard.)

Lil—Didn't we have the loveliest time last night?

Flo—Perfectly elegant!

Fan—Such fun! But its just too awfully awful. Mamma put a veto on my keeping such late hours.

Lil—Bother late hours! Girls, I've learned a new way to do my hair. It's the very latest. I didn't have time this morning. 'Twas all I could do to get my hair combed at all, without putting on any new wrinkles, but I'll show you girls how."

Flo—How awfully sweet of you.

Fan—I made some lovely fudges last night. Take some. (Passes them around.)

Lil—Say, have either of you got your Latin lesson?

Flo—Isn't it a fright? Wonder if we're expected to decline all those words?

Fan—I'll decline them with a vengeance, and I'm not afraid to tell Professor Smythe so either.

Lil—Oh, girls, didnt you nearly die yesterday in the Latin class when Professor Smythe asked Harry Gray what comes after "I love" and he said "You propose"?

Flo—Well, I should say I did. It was just too funny for anything, and did you notice how he blushed? I'd like to see him on his knees to Miss Harris. Wouldn't it be a sight for gods and men? He'll be there, too, for he's awfully sweet on Miss Harris. (Espying dude) Oh, girls, look over there. Isn't he swell?

Fan—You know it.

Lil—Doesn't his coat fit elegant?

Flo—What a stunning tie!

Fan—Just gaze on that cane.

Lil—And that single eye glass.

Flo—The sweet thing!

Fan—Such a darling.

Lil—(Hand to heart)—I am just completely gone.

(Dude approaches girls prepared for conquest.)

Dude—Beautiful warm day, girls.

Flo—(With withering look)—It's a cold day for fresh green chappies. (Dude looks crestfallen.)

Fan—There's our train, girls. [Exit girls.]

Joe Gamin—(To dude, with a jeering laugh)—Did ye ever get left? (Looking after Flo)—I Tell you she's a clipper—a regular stunner."

(Sound of arriving train.)

(Enter Mrs. Garrulous, nuns and others. Mrs. Garrulous espies Deacon Longface and approaches him.)

Mrs. Garrulous—My poor man be ye mournin' the loss of the pardner of your life? Have you been left to fight life's battles alone? How long sence ye lost her? You have my sympathies for I've been in the same boat myself. You must be brave and not give way to your feelin's. I had to learn that lesson—for I've laid away four pardners an' I know what it is to be left alone. But chirk up—you'll feel better by an' by.

Deacon—If you mean to inquire if I am mourning the departure of my wife, I will inform you that she has been in her grave for lo these twenty years. No, I am lamenting over the undue levity, ignorance and disrespect I see manifested every day I live.

Mrs. G.—For the land sakes man, is that all? I'd not let such things take all the comfort out of my life. You needn't think you can be like that feller what carried the world on his shoulders. Laws a massy; ye can't get everybody to look at things as you do. Now it 'pears to me if you'd look a leetle more on the bright side of life you'd be a heap happier and mebby have more influoence on the surroundin' world. Don't be wearin' sich blue glasses when you look at folks. Why I've seen a lot of trouble in my time, with losin' husbands, gittin married, an' the like, but dear me suz; if I'd gone about lookin' down my nose, and givin' everybody the shivers that come nigh me, no tellin' what would ha' become of me.

(Arrival of train.)

(During this speech the Deacon looks for way of escape and hastily rushes out when train comes.)

(Enter depot master and calls train.)

Mrs. Garrulous—(Looks after Deacon and continues)—Well I thank my stars none of my husbands was like that consarned chap. Wife's been dead twenty years, has she? No wonder, poor thing; I 'spect she was glad enough to shuffle off this mortal coil to git rid of sich an everlasting croaker.

(Among passengers who enter are Mr. and Mrs. Henpeck. Mr. H. is loaded down with boxes and bundles.)

Mrs. H.—Land, David, but it does take you an awful long time to get in, are you sure you have got everything? You are that careless it wouldn't surprise me if you had left half of the things on the train.

Mr. H.—(Counts boxes and bundles)—Yes they are all here every one, even to the lunch box of scraps that we might have thrown away and it would have made one less bundle to carry.

Mrs. H.—Thrown away; do you mean to say you would throw away good chicken bones and fresh bread and butter? I'm astonished at you; but it is just like your extravagance. If it hadn't been for me we never would have had anything. Those scraps will do for Bell's children to piece on for a whole day. Throw them away—indeed.

Mr. H.—But Susan—

Mrs. H.—Don't stand there and "Susan" me. You always would have the last word; but go for pity's sake and see how long we will have to wait in this stuffy depot. For my part I wish we were home where we could take a little comfort. I don't see why they can't have the trains make better connections.

Mr. H.—But, Susan, you would come. I told you it would be a hard journey.

Mrs. H.—You told me it would be a hard journey, and I would come—well, I'm heartily ashamed of you. Do you suppose for one minute that I thought of the hardships of the journey when Bell is sick and her baby has the measles and her girl has left and the doctor says she must be kept in perfect quiet and have nothing to worry her. I'd like to know who is to take care of her if it ain't her own mother. You'll drive me crazy with your much talking. You'd leave her to die I suppose—but not while she has a mother left to look after her. I don't believe a man has any heart anyway.

Mr. H.—But, Susan.

Mrs. H.—For pity's sake do stop your everlasting talking and go and see about our train. (Mr. H. goes to ticket window.) What Bell ever saw in her father to think so much of is more than I can see.

Mrs. Garrulous—Is your daughter sick did ye say?

Mrs. H—Sick! Well, I should say so; and if it wasn't for me I don't know what she would do. Mr. Henpeck is getting that shiftless that I am all worn out."

Mrs. G—Well, it does beat all; men do seem to be rather hard-hearted critters.

Mr. H—(Returning)—Susan, we will have to wait here just three hours. Would you like to go up town and look around?

Mrs. H—Go up town? Well, I guess not! Just as I get comfortably settled here, then you want to drag me off up town. I declare, I don't know what you think I am made of—and me that worried about Bell. But you know nothing of the anxieties of a mother's heart.

Mr. H—Now, Susan, don't you suppose I feel worried, too? You speak as if she only belonged to you. But you said—

Mrs. H—No matter what I said. I see you are determined to drive me

crazy. I'm here, and here's where I'm going to stay. No wonder my nervous system is such a complete wreck, having to live 25 years with such a man.

Mr. H—(Aside)—Yes, and I wonder I'm here at all.

Mrs. H—What did you say?

Mr. H—I only remarked it was getting cooler.

Mrs. H—I don't believe that is what you said at all, but rather than have you stand there and grumble, I'll go anywhere or do anything. Come on.

Mr. H—Oh, no, Susan, if you are so comfortable here, stay by all means.

Mrs. H—Who said I was comfortable here? Now, Mr. Henpeck, don't play the part of a spoiled child whose mamma has to coax it, but come on and let us go and get it over with. [Exit.]

Joe Gamin—Gee whiz! but she's a whole cyclone let loose. Golly! don't she make him walk the chalk?

(Arrival of train.)

(Enter Professor Learned, scholarly-looking gentleman with glasses. Buys his ticket and takes seat. Enter woman with a baby. Looks around, espies the professor and crosses over to him in haste. [A large doll may be used for the baby.]

Woman—Oh, sir, will you please hold my baby for a minute? I've lost my little boy in the crowd and I want to find him before he gets away from me entirely.

Prof. L—(Moved by her distress)—Yes, madam. (Takes baby and holds it awkwardly. Several minutes pass and the professor begins to look anxious. Mrs. Garrulous catches sight of him and approaches.)

Mrs. G—Your baby seems a likely child. (Talks to baby) Has papa got it? Yes, its own papa holds it. (To Prof.) Where is its ma?

Prof. L—Its mother has gone on an errand. I expect her back any moment.

Mrs. G—(To baby)—Is mamma gone? Its papa will take care of the little precious. It is just the image of its papa, so it is. How old is your baby?

Prof. L—I—I—I—I don't—eleven months.

Mrs. G—You don't tell me! Why, I wouldn't say it was a day over three months. What is its name?

Prof. L—John—Mary—I don't see why its mother does not come. (Looking around anxiously.)

Mrs. G—Oh, she'll come direckly. She's got to trading like as not, and don't know how time flies. Be ye raisin' the baby on the bottle?

Prof. L—I—I believe so.

Mrs. G—Yes, I thought so. It looks kinder peaked now, but it'll come out all right. I don't have no faith in them new-fangled baby foods they're praising so high in the papers.

Prof. L—Madam, could not I give you this baby now? You seem to understand babies so well and I never held a baby in all my life before.

Mrs. G—Land alive, man! Give me your own child! Why, has he gone stark, starin' crazy? You unnatural father! You inhuman wretch!

Prof. L—But, madam, you don't understand. It is not my baby. A woman came and asked me to hold her baby a minute, and she has not returned and I fear she means to abandon it.

Mrs. G—That's a likely story. You can't fool me. Silas told me to look out and not get took in,and not to talk to no strangers, neither. You're the one who is trying to abandon your own precious child. I'd call the perlice if it warn't for the baby.

Prof. L—But, madam, won't you believe me? Won't you please take it? (Rising and holding the baby toward her.) There's my train due in three minutes—what shall I do? Madam, I am to lecture at Bristol tonight on the "Origin and Nature of Microbes and Bacteria"—my audience will be waiting for me and I can not take this baby with me. Will you not have pity on me and relieve me?

Mrs. G—(Immovable)—No, sir! you can't impose on me. And, besides, what would I do with a baby when I am going to Mrs. Jackson's to visit? (Turns away and leaves him.)

Prof. L—(Making wildly for the door)—Will no one relieve me of this awful child? Can't I find a policeman or an orphan asylum or a foundling's home? [Exit wildly.]

(Train departs.)

(Enter opera company and get seated. Train arrives and from it enter Mrs. Needy and three children, Mrs. N. talking to depot master.)

Mrs. Needy—But, sir, what can I do? I am on my way to my dying husband in California. (Prima donna approaches and hears conversation.) It took nearly all I had to buy my ticket and it has been stolen. When I

went to show it to the conductor, it was gone. He let me ride as far as he dared, but he had to obey rules and put me off. And here I am, with my children. I know no one and I have not nearly money enough to buy another ticket—and my husband is dying. What SHALL I do? What CAN I do?

Depot Master—(Helplessly)—I don't know, madam, I'm sure. It is a sad case.

Prima Donna—Sir, we must do something. (To Mrs. Needy) How much will it take to buy you a ticket?

Mrs. Needy—Oh, it takes so much. It will be $35 at least. I know from the amount I had to pay in the first place.

Prima Donna—(Looking in purse)—How unfortunate! I havn't that much all told in my purse. But take my purse. I will depend on my people to get me through. (To depot master) And now we must plan some way to get more money for her. I have it! I will sing for the people. Surely they will pay in so good a cause. You tell the peope about it and then I will sing.

Depot Master—They will come down more handsomely, ma'am, if you do the speaking yourself. (She protests, but he speaks right out.) Ladies and gentlemen. Madam Pitti has something to say to you.

Prima Donna—Good people, here is a lady in distress. She is on her way to her dying husband in California. Her purse has been stolen. She can not stay here without money. She can not get to her husband's bedside without money. Need I say more? I have given her all I have, but it is not enough. People say I can sing—yes, they pay to hear me sing—and will you not let me earn some money for this unfortunate lady? And let your gifts be generous that she may have a surplus when she reaches her journey's end. Now, if you will listen, I will do my best for sweet charity's sake. (She sings.)

(The impressive silence is broken by Joe Gamin.)

Joe G—Golly! That's like heaven and the angels and them things they tell yer about.

(The depot master passes the hat and the shekels roll in. Joe Gamin puts in a dollar. The depot master returns the hat full of money to Madam Pitti and she pours it into the lap of Mrs. Needy. Madam Pitti helps her to put the money in her satchel. Mrs. Needy rises and speaks.)

Mrs. N—Good friends, I have no words to tell you of the gratitude that fills my heart. Think of my desperate need and what it is to have that need met so that I can reach my husband ere it is too late, and you can understand how I thank you. The God of the fatherless and widow will reward you, and if ever you or yours are strangers in a strange land, and in sore need, God will raise up friends to help you as you have me. (To Madam Pitti) Madam, may God's richest blessings go with you. You are no poorer for this day's deed, but richer far, for you have laid up treasure in heaven. [Exit Mrs. Needy.]

Joe G—Gosh! that makes a cove kinder chokey inside. (Dashes his sleeve across his eyes and advances to Madam Pitti and extends his hand with the one word "Shake!")

(Arrival of train.)

(Enter depot master and calls train.)

(Enter two autoists—Jack Meadows and Dick Carson—both dust-stained and limping: Dick limping worse, and Jack helping him. Joe Gamin saunters up.)

Joe Gamin—Hulloa, gents! (Aside) Look at der mugs on dem, would yer? Two swell drunks, as sure as guns. A cop'll be 'long here soon—better bring the gent over here.

Jack—You young rascal! You idiot! Can't you see what's the matter? (Brings out his goggles.)

Joe G—Oh-h, automobiles! (With impudent bow) 'Scuse me, gents. (Darts away.)

Jack—The young Arab! Old fellow, I am glad we have got this far, and where you can sit down. Let me telephone for a doctor.

Dick—Hang it all! No, I'll be all right pretty soon.

Jack—I believe your leg is broken, old man; your face is scratched and bruised, and it's a wonder your neck was not broken. The way you went over that wall would be the envy of a high diver. I had plenty to do myself about that time, in the mix-up of horse and motor and screaming ladies. But we all came out alive.

Dick—Yes; a little battered but still in the ring. I believe you are just as badly knocked out as I am.

Jack—Oh, no! I have only barked my shins, broken my finger and lamed my shoulder; and then I have a number of little scratches, just nothing.

Dick—How in the deuce did it all happen? We were not going a fraction over 40 miles an hour, and why those people couldn't get out of the way, I don't see.

Jack—You had just remarked, "Not an accident this run, isn't this glorious? This lifts a man up"—when, Great Caesar! we were lifted up in the air with a whirl that could give a Kansas cyclone pointers. I landed in some blackberry bushes and I TORE literally to the rescue of the ladies as soon as I could. They were not mangled corpses, for such screaming you never heard. You better believe I heaved a sigh of relief when I found they were not much hurt.

Dick—We can thank our lucky stars they weren't. I must have been a bit stunned; I don't remember all about it.

Jack—Well, I should say you were stunned. You lay there perfectly still. Of course all the people for miles around and from the next county gathered, and while I was still working with the ladies some of them dashed water into your face and brought you to.

Dick—So I missed part of the excitement?

Jack—You sure did. We had all kinds of trouble. You heard some of the last of it. The ladies, of course, did not want to stay there, and they were afraid to go home and they would not go to a farmhouse near. One of them wept and wailed and carried on to beat the band. She did not want the inhuman wretch—meaning yours truly—to come near her. Finally through the kindly offices of a young farmer whom I hired they were persuaded to start, riding behind an ancient farm horse that was quiet as an old cow, leading their horse behind and leaving their buggy—which was put out of business—by the roadside with our disabled car.

Dick—That was a benevolent old party, too, that loaded the pair of us into his democrat and brought us to the station.

Jack—Right you are; but our train will be here in five minutes. We would better begin in time to perform the laborious ceremony of getting ourselves out to the platform.

Dick—All right. Say, I noticed that our audience was free and handy with remarks and suggestions.

Jack—Well, rather. Do you remember the parting shot of that old codger: "For genooine orneriness, give me two fools and a devil wagon." I'll help you, old man. [They limp out.]

(Sound of arriving train.)

(Enter Miss Fishwell, who, with much fussing, gets seated. Enter widower with four children, dragging the youngest child kicking and screaming.)

Susie—I don't want to go home. I want to stay to my grandma's. She gives me cake and pie and let's me play in the dirt all I want to. (Father coaxes and scolds to quiet her, when a cry from the other little girl is heard.)

Mary Ellen—Quit that! Pa, make Grovie quit pulling my hair.

Father—Grover Cleveland, you must not pull your sister's hair. Have I not told you often enough?

Grover—(To sister)—Tattle tale! tattle tale! I would be a little tattle tale! (Exchange angry glances; all get seated at last. Father passes cookies around and begins to read a paper, when a scuffling and screaming is heard. He looks up and catches Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison fighting over the remains of a cake.)

Benjamin Harrison—You shan't have it. It's mine.

Grover Cleveland—'Tain't either! You had two on the train.

Benjamin H—I didn't no such thing. I only had one and Mary Ellen gave me a piece of hers. Pa, make Grovie let me alone.

Grover C—Oh, you old squallie cat!

Father—You, Grover Cleveland Smith, you behave yourself, and sit right down here. And you, Benjamin Harrison, come sit right here by me. (Boxes ears of both and sits them down in no gentle way.) Now, you two boys see if you can behave yourselves for a few minutes and let me read in peace. Oh, if Polly had only lived to help me rear these children!

(Little Susie slips down and runs around, and nears Miss Fishwell.)

Miss Fishwell—Won't you come here, little girl, and tell me what your name is? (Child hangs back, with finger in her mouth.)

Susie—I don't want to.

Miss F—Oh, do! Where did you get those pretty curls?

Susie—Grandma put 'em up in rags and made 'em.

Miss F—How very nice! (Fishes down in bag and brings out a sack of candy.) Here is some candy, if you will come and sit by me and tell me what your name is. (Gets child seated beside her.) Now, what IS your name, dear child?

Susie—Susie Catharine Smith. But they call me Susie. (Child eats a minute in silence, then looks up at Miss F. and says): Say, you're awful old, ain't you?

Miss F—(Trying to hide her disgust)—Why, my dear child, what makes you think that?

Susie—'Cause you wear glasses, and my ma was old—thirty-five—and she didn't wear glasses, and you must be lots older than she was.

Miss F—Where is your mamma, dear child?

Susie—Oh, she's up in heaven. She was real sick—just awful sick in bed—

(Father espies them and approaches and speaks to Susie.)

Father—Susie, you must not bother the lady. You must come here to me. I hope she has not troubled you, madam.

Miss F—Not at all. Do let her stay. I am enjoying her so much—she is so sweet and cute and pretty. If there is anything I do enjoy it is the artless prattle of a little child. The dear little thing has just been telling me that she has lost her mother.

Widower—Yes, Polly's spirit took its flight from its earthly tabernacle a year ago this June, and ever since that I have been the lonesomest man you ever saw. If it were not for the children I would not care to live.

Miss F—Oh, sir! You should not say that. Indeed you should not. There is a great deal for you to live for. And then only think what a nice family is given you to take care of.

Widower—That's what Polly said. She said to me: "Joseph, you must bear your troubles bravely and try and live for the children's sake." But I don't know—it seems sometimes as if I couldn't. It needs a woman's pleasant smile to make a home happy, and Polly was a mighty fine woman, and handy, too. Why, that woman could turn out more work in a day than any two women in our neighborhood.

Mary Ellen—Pa, make Grover Cleveland stop pinching me.

Grover—I wasn't touching her. It was Benjamin Harrison.

Father—If you don't stop your fussing, I'll come over there and whip you every one. (To Miss F.) Polly always managed the children.

Miss F—Let me see what I can do with them. They only need something to do to keep them out of mischief. (To children) Won't you come over here and have some candy?

Grovie—Of course we will.

Benjamin—You shan't have it all! (Boys try to push each other away. All come and get seated.)

Miss F—What nice, bright children; and what are your names?

Grovie—I'm Grover Cleveland, named for the Democratic president of the United States.

Benjamin—I'm Benjamin Harrison, named for the Republican president of the United States. We're twins, we are.

Father—You see, that came about because I am a Democrat and Polly's father was a Republican, and she always rathed leaned that way.

Mary—My name's Mary Ellen. I'm named for pa's ma and ma's ma.

Miss F—Well, they are nice children, and you may well be proud of them. So you must cheer up and not give way to your melancholy feeling. Fate may hold in store for you some great happiness yet. There are just as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.

Widower—You make me feel encouraged—indeed you do. They are a likely lot of youngsters, but I hardly know what to do with them. They have been with their grandma, Polly's mother, ever since Polly died, but I thought I would better take them home. The old lady is getting old and I did not think she ought to have the care of them. Now I will have to be looking around for a housekeeper.

Miss F—Oh, how sad! I hope you will find some one that will be kind to the poor little darlings.

Widower—That is just the trouble. I am so worried that I do not know which way to turn. You do not know of any one do you, Miss——

Miss F—Fishwell is my name—Araminty Fishwell.

Widower—What a pretty name. Araminty—a little longer than Polly, but equally as pretty. (Miss F. looks conscious.) And my name is Joseph Smith, of the firm of Smith & Green, Lumber Merchants, Topeka, Kan. Here is my card. But as I was saying, you don't know of any one who would be willing to accept the position, do you?

Miss F—No, I don't know as I do. You see, most girls that work out do not like children.

Widower—That's just it. I am sure I don't know what I shall do.

Miss F—Poor little dears! My heart aches for them.

Widower—I wish you could say the same for their father. I don't know but that he needs your sympathy more than they do.

Miss F—Indeed, I do sympathize with you, sir. It is very sad for a man to be without a helpmeet and a companion.

Widower—Can you not find it in your heart to become that helpmeet and companion and brighten an otherwise cheerless life?

Miss F—Oh, sir, this is so sudden! Why, I—I must have time to reflect. I—I—

Widower—(Interrupting)—Am I doomed to disappointment? Must I go home to a cheerless hearth? Oh, Miss Fishwell, relent! Make me happy by saying that you will be a mother to these little ones, and a life of devotion shall repay you.

(Joe Gamin saunters near.)

Joe G—Never fear, old man; she's got you nailed fast enough.

Miss F—Well, Mr. Smith, since you put it that way, and as I have always wanted to show the world what a good stepmother is like—I will.

Widower—Thank you, thank you, Araminty; let us go at once up town and procure a license and be married before you have time to change your mind. Children, behold in your father a happy man once more. Come, this is to be your new mamma.

Grover C—How do you make that out?

Widower—Come with us and we will tell you about it on the way.

(All go out. Joe Gamin sings a snatch of a popular love song.)

Mrs. Garrulous—(Looking after them)—Well, if that don't beat all.

(Train departs.)

(Enter depot master and calls train.)

(Enter Hans Bickerstein and Mike O'Toole, workingmen with dinner pails.)

Hans—Eh, Mike, haf you yoined der union? Der union is greadt, I dells you.

Mike—And phwat is the union?

Hans—Der union—der union—vy, it's der union—dat—dat somedings dat gifs de beeg fellers—der bloated bondt holters—der black eye, py cracious!

Mike—Sure, if there are onny black eyes to be given, I'm your mon. I kin bring out the colors right illigant, as dem artist fellers say. Is that all the union is?

Hans—Nein, nein, dere's more dan dat in der union. You verks ven you bleases; you start late, you kvit early. It's dem blue lapels or nodings.

Mike—Faith! and thot all sounds foine. I think I'll be afther wearing the blue label, though it's wearin' of the grane that's my style.

Hans—You kvit vork ven dey tells you to, and you loaf and take it easy, and you vait and you vait undil dey settles him.

Mike—And phwat do they sittle?

Hans—Der brinciple of der ting. You kvit verk for brinciple. Dey say dere is much at shtake.

Mike—Begorrah, and it's precious little steak we see now. It's Mickey O'Toole that'll be gettin' in where there's much steak.

Hans—I dells you, ve are peing grount down efery day unter der iron heel of the vultures dat are breying upon der poor verkinman. Ve do all der verk. De bloaded bontholters get all der monies. Der heafy weights crush us down. Dey ride in deir carriages. Ve valk afoot. Some tay dese tings be shanged. Ve vill rite in der carriages and der bloaded bontholters vill hang on behint.

Mike—An aisy kerridge is just my style. I can just see meself: "Jeems, when Mrs. O'Toole has had her airin', you may drive me down town. I wish to selict a pianny and an auti-mobile."

Hans—In der union dere is der valking delegate, who valks arount efery vonce in avile and den dey dells you to shtrike.

Mike—If it's strikin' ye want, I can give as nate a blow as ye would be afther desirin'. It's meself that loikes a bit of a scrap now and then. Who'll tread on the tail of me coat?

Hans—It's leeberty ve vant! Leeberty ve must haf, and all should join der union. Ve vant no scabs. Down mit der scabs!

Mike—Hooray for the union! Down with the scabs! Sure, Bill and Jim must be here wid the handcar; we must be afther going. [Exit.]

(Train departs.)

(Enter country bride and bridegroom, accompanied by bride's sister and her beau. Bride and groom are holding hands. Groom carries huge grip.)

Hiram (bridegroom)—Gee whilakers! If I'd a-knowed that it was so far to the depot I'd a-had pa druv the team to the depot, if they do be afeared of the ingine. Barbry, dear, ain't you clean tuckered out?

Barbara (bride)—Oh, no, dear; you know I'm used to walking and I haven't had anything to carry, and you have.

Hiram—Well, by jinks, I am glad we are here, anyway. I wonder how long we'll have to wait before our train comes. You set down here and rest and I'll go and ask that chap over thar. (Goes to ticket office.)

Hiram—Say, mister, can you tell me when our train leaves for Chicago? You see, me and my wife is goin' there for a weddin' trip. That's my wife over there with the purty bonnet on.

Agent—Ah, I see. Do you wish to purchase tickets?

Hiram—By gum, I liken to clean forgot the tickets. You see, mister, we wus just married this mornin'. We've been layin' out to go to some hifalutin' place on a tower for quite a spell back. When we heerd that the boys wus a-plannin' to give us a shivaree, we thought we'd give 'em the slip. Won't they be all-fired mad when they get there tonight and find we've tricked 'em? As I was sayin' I feel somewhat flustered and come pretty nigh forgettin' the tickets. Give me two. But say, you haven't told me when the cars leave.

Agent—The next train for Chicago leaves in 45 minutes.

Hiram—All right; and say, mister, if ever you come out our way come and see us and we'll show you the heaps of weddin' presents we got. I tell you they're a sight.

Agent—Thank you.

Hiram—(Goes back to wife, patting her on the shoulder)—Well, Barbry, our train leaves in 45 minutes, that young feller over there tells me. By the way, he's a mighty clever chap—no dude about him—and I wus tellin' him about our bein' married, and asked him to come and see us.

Barbara—Oh, Hiram, what would I do if such a tony lookin' feller would come to visit us?

Hiram—Do! Why, just look your purtiest as you always do, and give him some of your good punkin pie, and I bet he'll think you're a daisy. (Hiram sits down and fidgets and pulls coat collar and seems very uncomfortable.)

Lemuel—Say, Hi, what ails you? Yer worse than a fish out of water.

Barbara—Yes, dear, what is the matter? You did not get overhet, did you?

Hiram—I dunno, but this pesky coat feels as if it weighed a ton.

Lemuel—Why don't you take it off awhile?

Hram—I believe I will, for it's purty tight anyway. (Takes off coat and looks around for a place to put it, and is about to sit on it.)

Barbara—Here, Hiram, let me hold it. You may get it wrinkled.

Hiram—Now I feel a heap better, but I'm awful hungry. Lucindy, didn't you say you'd bring a lunch along?

Lucindy—Yes, I brought lunch all right. (Opens lunch basket and all eat heartily.

(Enter depot master and calls train.)

Barbara—(After lunch is disposed of)—Oh, dear! I wish I had some of the peanuts we saw when we was comin' here.

Hiram—Why didn't you say so and I'd a-got a lot.

Lemuel—I saw a stand just a little way from here. Let's go and get some.

Hiram—All right.

Barbara—You won't be gone long will you? And, Hiram, don't go nigh the railroad, for you might get run over, and then what would I do?

Hiram—No, I'll not go nigh the track, and we'll hurry right back.

(Mrs. Garrulous approaches bride.)

Mrs. G—So you're taking your wedding tower, be ye?

Barbara—(Looking confused—Why—why, how did you know? We 'lowed to let no one know it.

Mrs. G—(Laughing)—Well, never mind; mebby no one else has noticed it. 'Pears like to me you are rather young for a bride. How old be you, anyway?

Barbara—I'm twenty, goin' on twenty-one.

Mrs. G—You don't say! Why, I'd a-took you to be not more than sixteen. You're just as old as I was when Johu and me got married.

Barbara—Is your husband with you now?

Mrs. G—Which husband—Oh, you mean John? Why, bless you, child, he has been dead nigh on to twenty years.

Barbara—Then you are a widow woman?

Mrs. G—Law, me! no, child. John did not live more than five years, and after I'd been a widow a while I married Jim. He got killed by falling from a ladder, and after awhile Sam came shining around and we was married, but he took consumption and died, and I 'lowed not to sail the sea of matrimony again, but Tom came courting me, and he had a most persuadin' way. I knowed the neighbors were laffing in the sleeves' cause I was having an-

other beau, and at last I went to our parson and asked him if there was anything in the Bible about how many times a body ought to get married, or how long we had to wait after a pardner's death, and he owned up that the Bible didn't say nothing about it. Then my mind was easy and I took Tom for better or worse. But the grip took him off and it was proper lonely with no one to cook for but myself, so me and Silas was j'ined and now Silas is gettin' feeble.

(Hiram and Lemuel return and Barbara jumps up.)

Barbara—Oh, there comes Hiram. I'm so glad. I was afraid something had happened.

Mrs. G—Well, I'll not bother you. I know how married folks wants to be with their pardners.

Hiram—Here's the peanuts. You see I did not get run over. (Passes them around and all begin to eat industriously, when train is called and they all jump up in haste, the peanuts flying in every direction. Exit.)

(Depot master calls train. Train departs.

(Enter Miss Beaconstreet, of Boston. As soon as seated, Mrs. Garrulous accosts her.)

Mrs. G—Powerful sight of traveling now; 'pears like everybody had took it into their heads to go on the cars. Be you going far?

Miss B—The extent of my peregrinations can not have for you the remotest concern.

Mrs. G—But I mean where do you 'low to stop at?

Miss B—My ultimate destination I prefer to keep locked securely within my own inner consciousness.

Mrs. G.—You don't say so! I says to Silas, says I, If I don't go I'll never git there and I may as well go now and make that visit to Mrs. Jackson, her that was a Wilson. Her and me is old friends and she's been at me to visit her for nigh onto two years, and though I have to wait nearly the whole day in this here deepot to make connections with the one train that will get me to Dow's Crossing, here I be. I got my carpet rags ready to be wove and made my green tomato pickles and chow chow. What is your rule for chow chow now? Do you put the tomatoes and cabbage half and half? now? Do you put the tomatoes and cabbage half and half?

Miss B—I have no acquaintance with the formula for the concoction of such condiments. I seek for formulae to solve the problems of the universe. I am at present devoting my mentality to an exhaustive study of the ulterior results of the doctrine of metempsychosis. I also give a moiety of my time to a careful consideration of the contrast between the optimistic esoteric intricacies of Browning and the pessimistic, psychological philosophy of Schopenhauer.

(Joe Gamin strolls along, listens open-mouthed to this speech. When she finishes he ejaculates):

Joe—Gosh!

Mrs. G—But as I was saying, I made my pickles, and then I made over my black alpacy, and I had Sarah Gibbs in to help me two days—no a day and a half, for I remember she went home Wednesday noon, after I give her her dinner. I had it made with two ruffles and two bias folds. Sarah says ruffles is comin' in again, but I see you don't have no ruffles on your'n. That's dreadful pretty goods you got on; looks like good fast color, too. What might that be a yard, now—two bits?

Miss B—Your colossal inquisitiveness transcends belief. I will not minister to your prodigious idiosyncracies. I decline to enlighten you.

Mrs. G—How queer you do talk. And would you believe it, just as I got ready to start, Maria's—that's Silas' darter's—children come down with the mumps. I had to wait to see them through. I suppose your children have been through the mumps?

Miss B—(Excited and indignant)—Madam, I have no offspring! I am wedded to science. My thoughts are immutably fixed upon the unfathomable profundities of the invisible. They are buried deep in the ineffable possibilities of the illimitable unseen!

Mrs. G—Buried them, have you? There, there; don't take on so. It is sad, but I can sympathize with you, for I have buried six children and four husbands. Besides, my present one, Silas, is weakly too—kinder narvous like, but I don't incourage him in it. The least little thing upsets him. Why, would you believe it, he can't even stand my talking. Is your man hearty?

Miss B—Madam, your insolence is intolerable! Have I not previously intimated that I have systematically and invariably shunned matrimonial alliances? I am not married. (She escapes from her tormentor.)

Mrs. G—(Looking after her)—Not married? Good land! how could I know that and her so well along in years, too. Well, I don't wonder she feels bad about it, poor thing, and wanted to get away. But if she only

hadn't been in such a hurry I might have told her of a likely widower down our way; but it's too late now.

(Sound of arriving train.)

(Enter Miss Helen Flighty and two aunts, Misses Martha and Maria Ancient.)

Martha—I'm just completely exhausted and my nerves are all unstrung by the strain I have undergone in riding in that cab. I just expected any time that driver—that MAN—would take advantage of our being three unprotected ladies and carry us off or elope with us.

Maria—Compose yourself, sister; the danger is passed.

Martha—It is very easy to say compose yourself, but here we have to go on this journey just because that child must needs go and get acquainted with a man. To think that after all the pains we have taken to make her like one of ourselves—how we have guarded her and kept her from places where there were young men; how we have been her constant companions, and yet, in spite of all, she actually—yes, ACTUALLY—has talked and walked with a man, and even declares she can not live without him. It is enough to drive one distracted.

Helen—There, there, auntie; don't feel so badly. I will go and get you a cup of coffee to quiet your nerves and then you will feel better.

Martha—But, child, it will not be proper. There may be a man over there.

Helen—Nonsense, auntie; what's the odds if there is? He can't more than look at me, and you can't blame him for that. (Hurries away. While gone meets lover. They talk together, then she returns to her aunt with the coffee.)

Helen—Here is the coffee, auntie. (Aunt drinks.)

Martha—That does refresh me. (Here a man strolls along and looks admiringly at Helen. She also looks coquettishly at him.)

Martha—Mercy sakes, child! There is a man passing right by us. We must not look up. He might think we were forward and were trying to make up to him. Why, Helen, I do believe he looked at you.

Helen—Why, of course, auntie. He is an elegant gentleman, and I can't help it if he does admire me. Now, auntie, I will take this cup back and go and see about our baggage.

Maria—I don't like to have you go, but I know so little about such things; and besides I can't leave your aunt.

Martha—I fear it is hardly safe for her to do it, but there is no help for it. My nerves are too upset to do it. (Helen goes off.)

Maria—How fortunate it is we got Helen away from home so easily. I am sure we can cure her of this nonsense.

Martha—Well, I hope so. It is just too dreadful to contemplate. I have looked to see Helen grow up prim and proper, as she ought, but there seems to be no hope of it. (She sighs.)

Maria—Well, sister, don't be discouraged. Our getting her from home so soon may cure her entirely.

Martha—Where are my smelling salts? Oh, here they are; and it is time for me to take my medicine. (Takes little tablet.)

(Train arrives. Enter depot master and calls train.)

Maria—Seems to me Helen is gone a long time.

Martha—I was thinking so, too, but I suppose she has had some trouble about the baggage. I hope we have left nothing out of the trunks that we need. Did you get in all my shawls?

Maria—Yes, sister. I put in your very heaviest one, then the one a little lighter and the one still lighter, and then your light knit shawl; and I put in your foot warmer, too.

Martha—I don't see why Helen does not come. Oh, here she comes—and as I live—can I believe my eyes?

Maria—Why, sister, what—what is the matter, sister?

(Helen comes up with lover.)

Helen—Aunt Martha and Aunt Maria, let me introduce you to my husband, Mr. Harry Field.

Martha—Oh, I shall faint. (Gasping.) That I should live to see this day. (Wails and wrings her hands. Helen holds smelling salts to her nose. Harry fans her vigorously.)

Maria—There, there, sister; don't make a scene right here. It is dreadful—no one can feel it worse than I do—but we don't want to appear ridiculous.

Harry—Dear aunts, will you not forgive us? We love each other so. I could not give Helen up. We knew we must resort to stratagem, so I had a minister at hand, who married us at once.

Martha—Of all things—a man! If it only had not been a man she married!

Harry—Give me a chance, dear aunts, to show you that a man is not such a dreadful creature, after all, and I promise to do all in my power to make Helen happy.

Maria—Let us go home at once.

Martha—Yes yes, take me home. (She leans heavily on Harry.) I am so shocked I can not get along without you. [Exit.]

(People begin to settle themselves for the night; some appear to be asleep. All are quiet and resting. Enter a group of college boys.)

Phil—I tell you, fellows, this has been a jolly lark, if we can only get back without being discovered; it's 'way after hours.

Hal—Trust us for that. Hope that train won't be late.

(One begins to hum a college song, the others join, then they sing some "good night" song.)

[Curtain.]

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